

POLICY / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

FEBRUARY 6, 2012

Oliver Administration Building

Present

Subcommittee: Denise Arsenault, Chair, Karen Lynch and Susan Rancourt

School Committee and Administration: Melinda Thies, Mario Andrade and Mary Almeida

Denise Arsenault called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Susan Rancourt motioned to approve the minutes to the November 7, 2011 meeting; Karen Lynch seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

Search and Seizure

Melinda Thies opened discussion saying sometimes incidents occur which raise questions of whether a policy is implemented correctly and whether a policy reflects good legal procedure; a recent student hearing prompted a review of our search and seizure policy. Mario Andrade created a new draft policy adhering to current policy and influenced by new research; a two-pronged focus emerged—the administrator's role and the police's role. The administrator needs

reasonable suspicion, which is defined in the draft, to conduct a search and is in control of the search of all school-related property which is subject to search at any time. If there are reasonable grounds for suspecting illegal substances, a student and his/her belongings can be searched by administrators, it is critical for parents to be called in. Police become involved only if unlawful contraband is found. The SRO's role at the high school is to support students and develop a relationship with them; the SRO is never used for investigations so he can maintain his relationship with the students. Denise Arsenault would like the role of the SRO to be more clarified; Melinda will review the law. Susan Rancourt asked if there are checks and balances for "reasonable suspicious" to eliminate personal perception of vendettas. Mario said there is an appeals process; Melinda added the staff is all about individual rights and safety.

Regarding the use of drug sniffing dogs, because of the number of incidents since the first day of school, Melinda is not opposed to unannounced random visits of drug sniffing dogs to go through school property; according to Don Rebello, this tactic has reduced the number of drug-related incidents in Somerset. If drugs are discovered, the police and parents would be called in. However, this may be difficult to communicate to the public. Denise would like Andrew to review the policy before it goes to the full Committee.

MOTION: Susan Rancourt motioned to accept this draft revision of

Policy JFG Student Interrogations, Search and Seizure and refer it to the full Committee for a first reading on February 27th, pending a review by Andrew. Karen Lynch seconded. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

For the next policy meeting, Denise would like more discussion in reference to the SRO—1) that we have one, 2) why we have one, and 3) their function.

RI Educator Code of Professional Responsibility

Melinda presented the attached “R I Educator Code of Professional Responsibility” document created by RIDE; it is a foundation to define our evaluation system of teachers and administrators and comes as a precursor to our professional standards. Each Committee member liked the policy; Denise asked Melinda to write an introduction to the policy in place of the preamble and continue discussion at the March meeting.

Educator Evaluation System

Melinda explained the District has an evaluation committee represented by each school and all levels, which has met once. Their purpose is to build a system and organizational structure for the evaluation; we need to provide feedback on how we are doing with the evaluation and how that information is going to be utilized. An appeals process has not yet been developed and RIDE has not given much guidance on this yet. Also to be defined is the School

Committee's expectation of the evaluation system; the Committee needs only to affirm that one exists and is adhered to. Melinda has begun preparing a general statement on the broad organizational structure; needed is a process of quality assurance, feedback, and an appeals process. All educators, including administrators, will be evaluated by the model. Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

March 5, 2012

- SRO Policy (new)**
- RI Educator Code of Professional Responsibility**
- Educator Evaluation System**

Adjournment

MOTION: At 6:30PM Susan Rancourt motioned to adjourn; Karen Lynch seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

/ca